

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01
CAB-02 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 FAA-00 /066 W
-----180057Z 077554 /73

R 170931Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 185
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMCONSUL UDORN
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 5860

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, EAIR, LA, TH
SUBJ: LAO-THAI RELATIONS

REF: (A) BANGKOK 3569 (B) VIENTIANE 485 (ALL NOTAL)

1. THIRTEEN-MAN LAO DELEGATION HEADED BY DEFENSE DEPUTY UNDER-SECRETARY THAO DAMDUAN PROMDUANGSI VISITED NONG KHAI MAR 14 TO PICK UP LAO L-19 WHICH DEFECTING PILOT FLEW TO THAILAND SOME TIME AGO. VISIT WAS SECOND IN SERIES, FIRST OCCURRING A MONTH EARLIER WHEN LAO RETRIEVED THREE PLANES (REF A). LAO DID NOT TAKE BACK THE L-19 BECAUSE THEY WERE APPARENTLY NOT CERTAIN IT WAS FLYABLE, REPORTEDLY TELLING THAI AUTHORITIES THEY WILL RETURN LATER TO TOW THE PLANE BACK TO VIENTIANE. VISIT DEMONSTRATED CONTINUED LAO-THAI COOPERATION ON RETURN OF AIRCRAFT, AS NOTED REF B.

2. PERHAPS AS PARTIAL SPIN-OFF OF THIS SPIRIT, LAO AND THAI AVIATION COMPANIES APPEAR TO HAVE REACHED AGREEMENT PAVING THE
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WAY FOR RESUMPTION OF FLIGHTS BETWEEN VIENTIANE AND BANGKOK. ACCORDING TO THE NATION OF MAR 16, TAC DELEGATION IS EXPECTED TO VISIT VIENTIANE TO SIGN AGREEMENTS ON TICKET SALES AND GROUND HANDLING THIS WEEK, AT SAME TIME REQUESTING LAO AUTHORITIES TO REDUCE PROPOSED HANDLING FEE OF \$305 PER FLIGHT. ARTICLE QUOTED INFORMED SOURCES AS SAYING FLIGHTS WILL RESUME EARLY NEXT MONTH. IT SAID AGREEMENT WILL READ THAT LAO AND THAI WILL BE RESPONSIBLE

FOR TICKET SALES AND GROUND HANDLING FOR EACH OTHER IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES, WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OTHER KEEPING AN EYE ON THEIR INTERESTS. AIRFARE WILL RISE FROM \$47 TO \$65. TAC WILL PROPOSE FLYING THREE FLIGHTS PER WEEK, AND LAO AVIATION HAS ALREADY INDICATED IT WISHES TO OPERATE FLIGHTS ON THURSDAYS AND SATURDAYS. COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY HAS EXPRESSED NO OBJECTION TO LAO FLYING SOVIET (AN-24B) AIRCRAFT WITH SOVIET PILOTS, ACCORDING TO ARTICLE.

3. KNOWLEDGEABLE MFA OFFICIAL ADVISES THAT ARTICLE IS "VERY ACCURATE". HE SAID QUESTION OF REPATRIATION OF FUNDS AND FLIGHT FREQUENCY WERE PRINCIPAL STUMBLING BLOCKS ON THAI SIDE BUT THAT EVERYTHING NOW APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN WORKED OUT. HE ADDED THAT RTG IS IN AGREEMENT WITH PROPOSED ACCORDS AND HAS DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO TAC TO FINALIZE AND SIGN THEM.
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPATRIATION, MILITARY AIRCRAFT, FOREIGN RELATIONS, MINISTERIAL VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BANGKO05860
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770092-0545
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770351/aaaabsba.tel
Line Count: 78
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fab309b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BANGKOK 3569, 77 VIENTIANE 485
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3084208
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LAO-THAI RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, EAIR, LA, TH, (THAO DAMDUAN PROMDUANGSI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fab309b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009